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22862	7590	02/25/2005	EXAMINER	
GLENN PATENT GROUP 3475 EDISON WAY, SUITE L MENLO PARK, CA 94025			CHEA, PHILIP J	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2153	
DATE MAILED: 02/25/2005				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

**Office Action Summary**

Application No.

10/029,647

Applicant(s)

BALASUBRAMANIAN, VASANT

Examiner

Philip J Chea

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 December 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-58 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-58 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 18 March 2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-58 have been examined.

### *Information Disclosure Statement*

1. The listing of references in the specification is not a proper information disclosure statement. 37 CFR 1.98(b) requires a list of all patents, publications, or other information submitted for consideration by the Office, and MPEP § 609 A(1) states, "the list may not be incorporated into the specification but must be submitted in a separate paper." Therefore, unless the references have been cited by the examiner on form PTO-892, they have not been considered.

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102*

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

3. Claims 1,24,47,50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Maurille (US 6,484,196).

Maurille discloses a system for threading heterogeneous items of electronic communication into a post-response metaphor within context of a process, as claimed, comprising:

- means for interfacing with a plurality of external communication systems of varying type (see columns 2 and 3, lines 53-67 and 1, where systems are considered instant message, bulletin board, and so on);

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- a server, said server operative to create records that uniquely identify and link communication items created by a plurality of users within any of said external communication systems whereby a threaded trail of collaborative communication is created (see column 6, lines 44-57, where information is created that keep records of messages exchanged between users); and
- means for associating said threaded trail with any of a process and a process step (see Fig. 4D [1440], where process is to find out where signed copies of the TDS and Supp TDS are);
- [claim 47] a workspace (see Fig. 4D);
- [claim 47] means for displaying a process and its components steps (see Fig. 4D);
- [claim 47] means for creating and accessing items of communication by a user (see Fig. 4D);
- [claim 47] means for creating placeholders for future items (see column 11, lines 8-39, where space is allocated for the future response of recipients of a message).

As per claim 48, Maurille further discloses a root post, and a plurality of related posts arranged in a post-response metaphor, and wherein a response is associated with its parent post, so that posts and responses are displayed in a hierarchy, said root post forming the top level of the hierarchy (see Fig. 4D).

As per claim 49, Maurille further discloses records representative of said items of communication, said items of communication externally created and stored (see column 11, lines 8-19).

As per claim 50, Maurille further discloses an icon representative of a step, icons representing the steps of single process disposed in a common group, said icons integrated within or proximate to said form (see Fig. 4B, where icons are squares for processes and diamonds for steps).

As per claim 51, Maurille further discloses that records are stored in a first database table and wherein said means for associating a threaded trail with a method or a step of said method comprises a process context, said process context including one or both a process ID and a step ID (see Fig. 4D [254]), and an association with a record from said first database table, said process contexts stored in a second database table (Fig. 3B, process contexts [146] and records [142], and column 11, lines 8-39).

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As per claim 53, Maurille further discloses a plurality of interface elements invoking a connector to an external communication system wherein an item is either created or modified (see column 7, lines 19-45).

As per claim 54, Maurille further discloses a class that defines methods for interacting with said external system (see column 7, lines 56-62, where object-oriented implies the uses of a class).

As per claim 55, Maurille further discloses that user requests are received by said connector and initiated on said external system (see column 7, lines 46-55).

As per claim 58, Maurille further discloses a second user interface for selection of a process or process step so that at least one associated threaded trail is displayed (see column 6, lines 58-67, where a second client could be performing the same commands as the first client as in claim 47).

#### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 2-8,10,11,15-19,21, 25-31,33-35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maurille as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Flanagan ("Java In a Nutshell").

As per claims 2 and 25, although the system disclosed by Maurille shows a connection to external communication systems through the use of Active Server Pages (see column 7, lines 46-55), it fails to disclose a connector API to external communication systems.

Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Maurille, as evidenced by Flanagan.

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In an analogous art, Flanagan discloses that it would have been obvious to use the benefits of a Java programming API to interface with databases (see page 17 Table 2-1 for java's).

Given the teaching of Flanagan, a person having ordinary skill in the art would have readily recognized the desirability and advantages of modifying Maurille by employing a Java programming API to interface with databases, such as disclosed by Flanagan, in order to utilize the benefits of Java encapsulation in a convenient package specifically tailored for accessing databases.

As per claims 3 and 26, Maurille in view of Flanagan further disclose connectors and methods of interacting with external communication systems (see Maurille column 7, lines 46-55).

As per claim 4, Maurille in view of Flanagan further disclose methods that include;

- creating a new item (see Maurille column 12, lines 31-46);
- deleting an existing item (see Maurille column 12, lines 31-46);
- viewing an item (see Maurille column 12, lines 31-46);
- editing an item (see Maurille column 12, lines 31-46); and
- creating a placeholder for a future item (see Maurille column 11, lines 8-39, where space is allocated for the future response of recipients of a message).

As per claims 5 and 27, Maurille in view of Flanagan further disclose that a connector accepts a request for an action from within a system and initiates said requested action in one of said external systems (see Maurille column 7, lines 46-55, where the API of Flanagan is used instead of Active Server Pages of Maurille).

As per claims 6 and 29, Maurille in view of Flanagan further disclose a threading server and records include:

- a unique ID (see Maurille Fig. 2);
- title (see Maurille Fig. 2);
- description (see Maurille Fig. 2);
- type (see Maurille Fig. 2);
- original post ID (see Maurille Fig. 2);

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- parent ID (see Maurille Fig. 2); and
- item data (see Maurille Fig. 2).

As per claims 7 and 30, Maurille in view of Flanagan further disclose a marker or string passed to a native external system for the purpose of interacting with the item (see Maurille columns 11 and 12, lines 65-67 and 1-15, where marker is considered a user has opening an item).

As per claims 8 and 31, Maurille in view of Flanagan further disclose that items of communication are stored within the external system from they originate (see Maurille column 11, lines 8-19).

As per claims 10 and 33, Maurille in view of Flanagan further disclose a process context including one or both of:

- a process ID (see Maurille Fig. 4D [254]);
- a process step ID; and
- means for associating process contexts with records (see Maurille Fig. 3B, process contexts [146] and records [142], and column 11, lines 8-39).

As per claims 11 and 34, Maurille in view of Flanagan further disclose that all records associated with a common root are linked to form a thread, and wherein each thread relating to a particular process context is associated with the particular process context (see Maurille column Fig. 4D [1440]).

As per claims 12 and 35, Maurille in view of Flanagan further disclose that records are stored in a first table and process contexts are stored in a second table, and associating process contexts with records comprising associating at least one entry in said first table with at least one entry in said second table (see Maurille, Fig. 3B, process contexts [146] and records [142], and column 11, lines 8-39),

As per claim 15, Maurille in view of Flanagan further disclose a persistent data store for records, said persistent data store in communication with said server (see Maurille column 6, lines 44-57).

As per claim 16, Maurille in view of Flanagan further disclose that said persistent data store comprises one of:

- a relational database (see Maurille column 6, lines 44-57);
- an object-oriented database; and
- custom-formatted files (see Maurille column 6, lines 44-57).

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As per claim 17, Maurille in view of Flanagan further disclose accesses to persistent data store are mediated through a standard API (see Flanagan, page 17, Table 2-1).

As per claim 18, Maurille in view of Flanagan further disclose comprising at least one client (see Maurille, column 6, lines 58-65).

As per claim 19, Maurille in view of Flanagan further disclose a servlet component instantiated on a web server, said servlet component providing a link between said server and a web browser (see Fig. 3A, servlet [114]).

As per claim 20, Maurille in view of Flanagan further disclose that said client comprises an intranet application (see Maurille column 6, lines 58-65).

As per claim 21, Maurille in view of Flanagan further disclose a user interface, wherein said user interface displays a process and its individual steps, said threaded trails of communication associated with said process or a process step (see Fig. 4D [1440]).

6. Claims 9-14 and 32,36-46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maurille in view of Flanagan as applied to claims 6 and 25 above, and further in view of Guck (US 5,794,039).

As per claims 9 and 32, although the system disclosed by Maurille in view of Flanagan shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose that connectors are registered on a threading server.

Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Maurille in view of Flanagan, as evidenced by Guck.

In an analogous art, Guck discloses a relational database to allow storage and access of messages that interface a plurality of external communication systems further having connectors registers on a server (see columns 5 and 6, lines 60-67 ad 1-15).

Given the teaching of Guck, a person having ordinary skill in the art would have readily recognized the desirability and advantages of modifying Maurille by registering connectors on a server, such as disclosed by Guck, in order to access data of different format (see Guck column 1, lines 35-49).



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As per claims 13 and 36, Maurille in view of Flanagan and in view of Guck further disclose that registering a connector comprises providing:

- name of communication type to be registered (see Guck columns 6 and 7, lines 58-67 and 1-8);
- a description of said type to be registered (see Guck columns 6 and 7, lines 58-67 and 1-8);
- at least one class that implements said connector of a type to be registered through a client (see Guck column 8, lines 23-34, where objects implies an instantiation of a class);
- at least one image file to designate items of a type to be registered within a user interface of said client; and
- optionally, network address of a server for said type to be registered.

In considering at least one image file to designate items of a type to be registered within a user interface of said client, it is well known in the art to use a graphical icon to represent different software that is implemented on a server, for instance bulletin board icon, chat icon, or mail icon.

As per claims 14 and 37, Maurille in view of Flanagan and in view of Guck further disclose that a server provides a listing of registered communication types (see Guck column 8, lines 35-47).

As per claim 38, Maurille in view of Flanagan in view Guck further disclose providing a persistent data store for records and process contexts, said persistent data store in communication with a server (see Maurille column 6, lines 44-57).

As per claim 39, Maurille in view of Flanagan in view of Guck further disclose said persistent data store comprises one of:

- a relational database (see Maurille column 6, lines 44-57);
- an object-oriented database; and
- custom-formatted files (see Maurille column 6, lines 44-57).

As per claim 40, Maurille in view of Flanagan in view of Guck further disclose providing a standard API through which accesses to said persistent data store are mediated (see Flanagan page 17 Table 2-1 for java's, and rejection for claim 2 above).

As per claim 41, Maurille in view of Flanagan in view of Guck further disclose providing at least one client (see Maurille, column 6, lines 58-65).

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As per claim 42, Maurille in view of Flanagan in view of Guck further disclose a servlet component instantiated on a web server, said servlet component providing a link between said server and a web browser (see Maurille Fig. 3A, servlet [114]).

As per claim 43, Maurille in view of Flanagan in view of Guck further disclose that client comprises an intranet application (see Maurille column 6, lines 58-65).

As per claim 44, Maurille in view of Flanagan in view of Guck further disclose a user interface, wherein said user interface displays said process and its individual steps, said threaded trails of communication associated with said process or process step by means of said process contexts (see Maurille Fig. 4D [1440]).

7. Claims 22,23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maurille in view of Flanagan as applied to claims 10 and 18 above, and further in view of Official Notice.

As per claim 22, although the system disclosed by Maurille in view of Flanagan shows

- creating a new post (see Maurille Fig. 3A [162]);
- viewing a list of posts and responses in order of creation (see Maurille Fig. 4D);
- searching posts and responses according to user-defined criteria (see Maurille column 7, lines 24-31);
- opening and viewing an item (see Maurille column 11, lines 54-60);
- creating a new response for any given post or response (see Maurille Fig. 4D);
- deleting a post/response item (see Maurille column 12, lines 31-46);
- viewing detailed information related to a post/response item (see Maurille Fig. 4D); and
- creating a placeholder for a future item (see Maurille column 11, lines 8-39);
- wherein a user performs operations within context of said process or process step (see Maurille Fig. 4D),

it fails to disclose viewing a list of all responses to a given post as a collapsible hierarchy..

Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Maurille in view of Flanagan, as evidenced by Official Notice.

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It would have been obvious to include a collapsible hierarchy such as one found in Microsoft Windows 95, where subfolders are collapsible in Explorer. It is well known in the art that a collapsible structure allows a user to expand and contract the many potential subfolders or messages.

Given the teaching of Official Notice, a person having ordinary skill in the art would have readily recognized the desirability and advantages of modifying Maurille in view of Flanagan by employing a collapsible hierarchy of messages, such as disclosed by Official Notice, in order to save space on the screen when not viewing entire threads and thread responses.

As per claim 23, Maurille in view of Flanagan and in view of Official Notice further disclose that a post/response item can only be deleted by creator of said item or a system administrator (see Maurille column 12, lines 31-46).

8. Claims 45 and 46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maurille in view of Flanagan in view of Guck as applied to claim 44 above, and further in view of Official Notice.

As per claim 45, although the system disclosed by Maurille in view of Flanagan in view of Guck shows

- creating a new post (see Maurille Fig. 3A [162]);
- viewing a list of posts and responses in order of creation (see Maurille Fig. 4D);
- searching posts and responses according to user-defined criteria (see Maurille column 7, lines 24-31);
- opening and viewing an item (see Maurille column 11, lines 54-60);
- creating a new response for any given post or response (see Maurille Fig. 4D);
- deleting a post/response item (see Maurille column 12, lines 31-46);
- viewing detailed information related to a post/response item (see Maurille Fig. 4D); and
- creating a placeholder for a future item (see Maurille column 11, lines 8-39);
- wherein a user performs operations within context of said process or process step (see Maurille Fig. 4D),

it fails to disclose viewing a list of all responses to a given post as a collapsible hierarchy..

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Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Maurille in view of Flanagan in view of Guck, as evidenced by Official Notice.

It would have been obvious to include a collapsible hierarchy such as one found in Microsoft Windows 95, where subfolders are collapsible in Explorer. It is well known in the art that a collapsible structure allows a user to expand and contract the many potential subfolders or messages.

Given the teaching of Official Notice, a person having ordinary skill in the art would have readily recognized the desirability and advantages of modifying Maurille in view of Flanagan in view of Guck by employing a collapsible hierarchy of messages, such as disclosed by Official Notice, in order to save space on the screen when not viewing entire threads and thread responses.

As per claim 46, Maurille in view of Flanagan in view of Guck further disclose that a post/response item can only be deleted by creator of said item or a system administrator (see Maurille column 12, lines 31-46).

9. Claims 52,56,57 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maurille as applied to claim 47 above, and further in view of Official Notice.

As per claim 52, although the system disclosed by Maurille shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose that selecting an icon causes a trail associated with a corresponding process step to be displayed on said form.

Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Maurille, as evidenced by Official Notice.

It would have been obvious to allow a user to select an icon and have a collapsible hierarchy expand to include linked messages much like folders can be expanded in Microsoft Windows 95, where Explorer allows a user to expand a tree of folders to display subfolders.

Given the teaching of Official Notice, a person having ordinary skill in the art would have readily recognized the desirability and advantages of modifying Maurille by employing a collapsible hierarchy of

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messages, such as disclosed by Official Notice, in order to save space on the screen when not viewing entire threads and thread responses.

As per claim 56, although the system disclosed by Maurille shows

- creating a new post (see Fig. 3A [162]);
- viewing a list of posts and responses in order of creation (see Fig. 4D);
- searching posts and responses according to user-defined criteria (see column 7, lines 24-31);
- opening and viewing an item (see column 11, lines 54-60);
- creating a new response for any given post or response (see Fig. 4D);
- deleting a post/response item (see column 12, lines 31-46);
- viewing detailed information related to a post/response item (see Fig. 4D); and
- creating a placeholder for a future item (see column 11, lines 8-39);
- wherein a user performs operations within context of said process or process step (see Fig. 4D),

it fails to disclose viewing a list of all responses to a given post as a collapsible hierarchy..

Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Maurille, as evidenced by Official Notice.

It would have been obvious to include a collapsible hierarchy such as one found in Microsoft Windows 95, where subfolders are collapsible in Explorer. It is well known in the art that a collapsible structure allows a user to expand and contract the many potential subfolders or messages.

Given the teaching of Official Notice, a person having ordinary skill in the art would have readily recognized the desirability and advantages of modifying Maurille by employing a collapsible hierarchy of messages, such as disclosed by Official Notice, in order to save space on the screen when not viewing entire threads and thread responses.

10. Claim 57 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maurille as applied to claim 47 above, and further in view of Kennedy (US 6,330,589).

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Although the system disclosed by Maurille shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose creating a record for an item of communication in advance of creating said item, so that said record is displayed as a placeholder within said trail.

Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Maurille, as evidenced by Kennedy.

In an analogous art, Kennedy discloses a message board where messages are stored in a database where related messages are displayed in threads. Further disclosing a place holder for messages that have yet to be received (see column 23, lines 14-27).

Given the teaching of Kennedy, a person having ordinary skill in the art would have readily recognized the desirability and advantages of modifying Maurille by employing a place holder, such as disclosed by Kennedy, in order to eliminate the need to rethread conversations by using a place holder that can be filled with data later.

### ***Double Patenting***

11. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

12. Claims 1-9,13-32,36-49,53-57 provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-20,22-41,43-50 of copending Application No. 10/032110 in view of Maurille (US 6,484,196).

An obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but an examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s)

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because the examined claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985).

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection.

Application 10/032110	Instant Application
<p>Claim 1</p> <p>A system for threading heterogeneous items of electronic communication into a post-response metaphor, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• means for interfacing with a plurality of external communication systems of varying type;</li> <li>• a server, said server operative to create records that uniquely identify and link communication items created by a plurality of users within any of said external communication systems whereby a threaded trail of collaborative communication is created.</li> </ul>	<p>Claim 1</p> <p>A system for threading heterogeneous items of electronic communication into a post-response metaphor <b>within context of a process</b>, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• means for interfacing with a plurality of external communication systems of varying type;</li> <li>• a server, said server operative to create records that uniquely identify and link communication items created by a plurality of users within any of said external communication systems whereby a threaded trail of collaborative communication is created;</li> <li>• <b>means for associating said threaded trail with any of a process and a process step</b></li> </ul>

Maurille discloses a means for associating a threaded trail with any of a process and a process step (see Fig. 4D [1440], where process is to find out where signed copies of the TDS and Supp TDS are). The

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benefit or advantage of modifying claim 1 of copending Application No. 10/032110 would be to use a group of users as a knowledge base to allow for collaboration in order to get answers and process requests quickly.

Claims 2-9,13-20 are rejected by claims 2-17 of copending Application No. 10/032110 for being duplicate claims.

Application 10/032110	Instant Application
Claim 18 wherein said user interface displays said threaded trails of communication	Claim 21 wherein said user interface displays <b>a process and its individual steps</b> , said threaded trails of communication <b>associated with said process or process step</b> .

Maurille discloses a user interface that displays a process and its individual steps (see Fig. 4D [1440]).

The benefit or advantage of modifying claim 18 of copending Application No. 10/032110 would be to use a group of users as a knowledge base to allow for collaboration in order to get answers and process requests quickly.

Application 10/032110	Instant Application
Claim 19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creating a new post;</li> <li>• viewing a list of posts and responses in order of creation;</li> <li>• searching posts and responses according to user-defined criteria;</li> </ul>	Claim 22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creating a new post;</li> <li>• viewing a list of posts and responses in order of creation;</li> <li>• searching posts and responses according to user-defined criteria;</li> </ul>



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• opening and viewing an item;</li> <li>• creating a new response for any given post or response;</li> <li>• deleting a post/response item;</li> <li>• viewing detailed information related to a post/response item; and</li> <li>• creating a placeholder for a future item.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• opening and viewing an item;</li> <li>• creating a new response for any given post or response;</li> <li>• deleting a post/response item;</li> <li>• viewing detailed information related to a post/response item; and</li> <li>• creating a placeholder for a future item;</li> <li>• <b>wherein a user performs operations within context of said process or process step.</b></li> </ul>
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Maurille discloses that a user performs operation within context of said process or process step (see Fig. 4D [1440]). The benefit or advantage of modifying claim 19 of copending Application No. 10/032110 would be to use a group of users as a knowledge base to allow for collaboration in order to get answers and process requests quickly.

Claim 23 is rejected by claim 20 of copending Application No. 10/032110 for being duplicate claims.

Application 10/32110	Instant Application
Claim 22	Claim 24
see double patenting rejection for claim 1	see double patenting rejection for claim 1

Claims 25-37 are rejected by claims 23-32 of copending Application No. 10/032110 for being duplicate claims.

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Application 10/032110	Instant Application
Claim 33 providing a persistent data store for said records, said persistent data store in communication with said server	Claim 38 providing a persistent data store for said records <b>and said process contexts</b> , said persistent data store in communication with said server

Maurille discloses providing a persistent data store for said records and said process contexts, said persistent data store in communication with said server (see Maurille column 6, lines 44-57). The benefit or advantage of modifying claim 33 of copending Application No. 10/032110 would be to user a group of users as a knowledge base to allow for collaboration in order to get answers and process requests quickly.

Claims 39-44 are rejected by claims 34-39 of copending Application No. 10/032110 for being duplicate claims.

Application 10/032110	Instant Application
Claim 40 see double patenting rejection for claims 19 and 22	Claim 45 see double patenting rejection for claims 19 and 22

Claim 46 is rejected by claim 41 of copending Application No. 10/032110 for being duplicate claims.

Application 10/032110	Instant Application
Claim 43 A graphical user interface for displaying and accessing heterogeneous items of electronic	Claim 47 A graphical user interface for displaying and accessing heterogeneous items of electronic

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<p>communication threaded into a post-response metaphor comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a workspace</li> <li>• an electronic form displayed within said workspace wherein said items of communication are presented in a threaded trail of collaborative communication;</li> <li>• means for creating and accessing items of communication by a user; and</li> <li>• means for creating placeholders for future items.</li> </ul>	<p>communication threaded into a post-response metaphor comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a workspace</li> <li>• an electronic form displayed within said workspace wherein said items of communication are presented in a threaded trail of collaborative communication;</li> <li>• <b>means for displaying a process and its component steps,</b></li> <li>• means for creating and accessing items of communication by a user; and</li> <li>• means for creating placeholders for future items</li> </ul>
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Maurille discloses means for displaying a process and its component steps (see Fig. 4D). The benefit or advantage of modifying claim 43 of copending Application No. 10/032110 would be to user a group of users as a knowledge base to allow for collaboration in order to get answers and process requests quickly.

Claims 48-55 are rejected by claims 44-48 of copending Application No. 10/032110 for being duplicate claims.

Application 10/032110	Instant Application
Claim 49	Claim 56
see double patenting rejection for claims 19 and 22	see double patenting rejection for claims 19 and 22

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Claim 57 is rejected by claim 50 of copending Application No. 10/032110 for being duplicate claims.

**Conclusion**

13. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Rich; Charles et al. US 5819243 A

Shutt; David R. et al. US 5905987 A

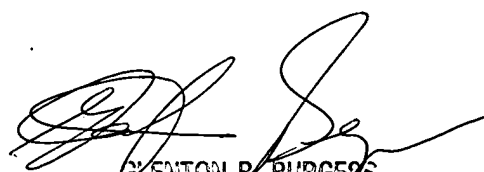
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Philip J Chea whose telephone number is 571-272-3951. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:00-4:30 (1st Friday Off).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenn Burgess can be reached on 571-272-3949. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Philip J Chea  
Examiner  
Art Unit 2153

PJC 2/9/05

  
GLENN E. BURGESS  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100